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ADVENTURES OF TINY, TINIER, AND TINIEST.

MARCUS · WARD · & · CO ·



LONDON · & · BELFAST

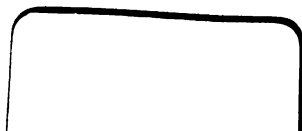
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

A TALE FOR CHILDREN. BY A. E. I.

THE MIDSUMMER FAIRIES: OR THE



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THE MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

OR

The Adventures of Ting, Tiniar, and Tiniest





THE MIDSUMMER FAIRIES

OR

The Adventures of Tiny, Tinier, and Tiniest

By A. E. I.



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ROYAL ULSTER WORKS
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FINY heard the birds singing, and saw the sun shining, and she was so glad her lessons were over, and that she might go out into the garden and have a gambol with her playmate, "Bluff," who was waiting most patiently for her.

Bluff was not an intellectual doggie; he hated "study hours," when his little mistress was shut up with her governess. He knew quite well when it was time for her to come out, for a great clock over the stables struck one, but even before it struck he knew when it was time, so

wise was he, for he sat on the top of the stone steps leading up to the hall door, from whence he could see into the study window ; piles of books he saw, and a slate, and a desk and copy-books, and often a tearful little face shaded by long fair curls bent over writing, and sometimes, oh ! such little black inky fingers were seen, an inky patch was also frequently decorating a little round pink cheek, and a tossed fringe of hair framed eyes, oh ! so blue, but so troubled and puzzled in look.

Some days when it rained he watched the governess begin a piece of "work," and hand it to the little girl, and she would look up at him and say, "No, Bluffy, no, no." Ah ! then he knew his fate was sealed, and that he must remain a discontented and miserable doggie all day. No little mistress ; no fun ; only to go and lie beside stupid old Joe in the stable yard.

This day was what Tiny called "Grammar day." Oh! it was hard to listen to all "Lindley Murray" had to say about moods, and tenses, and degrees of comparison, and *not* to listen to the inviting sounds heard through the open window.

As she hastily shut the door of the book-press, the English Grammar fell on the floor. "Oh! you tiresome old thing!" she exclaimed. "Go back into your corner, and don't let me see your face for a whole long week. I wish I'd a fairy godmother; I'd get her to turn all my Grammar books into mice, and then I'd make my dear big Pussy eat them all up for me."

However, the day we speak of was a happy one; Bluff had *seen* the books put away, no "work" given, and a joyous face looked out at him and said, "Ah, ha! Mr. Bluff, I'm coming."

Down the steps Tiny bounded, and ran races with Bluff round and round the garden walks until she was quite tired, when she threw herself down on the lawn, and as he sat down beside her, she said, "Oh, Bluffy! how I do love play! and how I do dislike grammar! don't you? and how glad I am lessons are over for to-day; how can I ever remember all about it! and to say good, better, best, I think it is far nicer to say good, gooder, goodest."

Bluff wagged his tail in response, and then, closing his eyes and resting his nose on his two paws, said, plainly, "*Please* don't let us talk any more about grammar, but sleep."

Tiny lay still and softly stroked his silky coat. She was such a charming little girl, and so called because she was very small for her age; sometimes when introduced

to visitors she would draw her little self up and say, "Oh! don't you know, my name is not really Tiny, I am Estella, and some day I shall be as tall as mama."

To-day she wore a white dress all over with little frills, and a wide pink sash, and as she left the house, her mama kissed her and said, "Good-bye, my rose-bud;" and papa said, "Where are you off to now, my fairy?"

She thought of this as she lay on the grass.

"A fairy, a fairy, oh! I have often read about them, but, oh! how I should love to really see one, and speak to one; I wish——"

The summer breeze stirred gently the leaves on the trees, and Tiny fancied she heard clapping of little hands and trills of laughter, and then a sweet soft voice said, "Come! come!" and she felt herself lifted into the air. She closed her eyes with the delicious sensation, and

only opened them when she found herself laid down gently on a bed of moss. She was under a tree in a large wood, and the little birds seemed all singing, but songs with words, which she had never heard before; one on a bough close to her winked its little eye at her, and, putting its head on one side, sang—

“You wish to see fairies, so ’tis said,
Oh! Tiny, beauteous little maid?
Tiny, Tinier, and Tiniest,
Never on grammar here insist.
The fairies all frolic and dance with glee,
Come along, Tiny, come and see;
And when you form one of our joyous band,
You’ll sing, ‘Where so happy as fairy land?’”

Tall ferns grew beside her; and as she looked at one of them, it seemed to sway backwards and forwards in an unusual manner, and attracted her attention. As she



gazed steadily at it, she perceived a caterpillar on the end of the leaf (the kind she called "woolly-hairy," and often caught and kept in a box to watch for a time).

"Oh ! what an odd creature it looks !" she said.

"Odd, am I ?" said a small voice ; "and pray who may you be, monster ?"

"Oh !" said Tiny, "oh ! are you a fairy—a real one ?"

"Yes," said the voice, "I am, and called Tinier ;" and up he stood, such a little beauty, with a coat on of soft brown fur, vest and breeches of pale brown satin, little top boots, and a black velvet cap with two long feathers in it.

"Ah !" said Tiny, "you are the dearest, delightfulest little wee man I ever saw. Do tell me where you live ; and will you show me the way to fairyland ? I am not a 'monster ;' I am Tiny."

"Well," he responded, "you were once very kind to a relative of mine, and saved his life ; so in return I will do as you wish, but on two conditions : you must not let the monster giants you live with know where to find us ; and you must let me leave you ere the sun sets."

"Oh ! I will promise anything if you will show me fairies," said Tiny.

"Do you know you interrupted me having a swing on a fern frond," said Tinier ; "it was pastime for me on my way to visit a friend ; she lives near. Will you wait for me a few seconds?" and so saying, he began to climb up the stalk of a tall foxglove, and crept into one of its shaded mauve bell-like blossoms.

Soon he reappeared and said, "Lady Digitalis is 'not at home,' I find, to-day ; she delights in this woodland retreat, but I never can care much for it, and prefer



a more open and sunny situation. But haste! I must transform you a little ere you can follow me. Say 'One, two, three, and away.'"

So Tiny bravely said "One, two, three, and away," drew a long breath, closed her eyes, and felt she was sailing through the air. Presently she alighted on something soft, and on opening her eyes—Oh! where was she? Nowhere she had ever been in her life before, or even dreamed of. It was surpassingly beautiful. She stood in halls of dazzling brightness, all white, but with a sheen like mother-of-pearl in the sun; there was no roof, only the blue sky, and in the centre of the hall rose pillars of pale green aqua-marine, with curious shaped cornices of gold at the top.

"This is my summer retreat," said Tinier; "I am charmed you admire it so much. Here comes my

wife ; let me introduce you to her ; Tiniest is her name."

Tiny looked in rapture at the little figure advancing to meet her, clothed in a delicate shade of green velvet, and looking so fair and gentle, with rows of pearls round her neck, and a pearl coronet on her head.

She bowed and said, "You are welcome to Lily Lands. You look a dear little fairy ; I think you must be a daughter of our neighbour, the Baroness. I must congratulate you on the effectiveness of your fresh and lovely toilette."

Tiny now for the first time looked at herself ; she had green satin boots, a petticoat of pale pink satin, and a green bodice and tunic, all embroidered and fringed with diamonds, and a single diamond formed her little cap ; it was on one side of her head, and she felt as if it

would fall off every second ; so very beautiful ! she thought, and so like a rose-bud I've seen at home in the garden, all glittering with morning dew.

"Come, come," said Tinier, "it is time we set out to visit our friends while the sun shines. Send for our coach."

"Bee ! Quickly !" said Tiniest to a footman who stood behind them, and he disappeared with a humming noise to execute the order.

Soon they heard a flapping sound, and Tiny saw such a lovely coach at the door, with yellow and blue panels, curious in form too, like wings. When all were seated, they gently rose in the air, not very high, and stopped to alight on every beautiful bank of flowers they passed, to admire the scenery.

"Oh !" said Tiny, "this is far nicer than any coach

I was ever in before ; ours, you know, at home, keep close on the ground."

"So I have heard," said Tinier, "and very dull work it must be. We call this 'aerial exercise ;' all we fairies delight in it, but we only indulge in it in sunshine ; see how many are out to-day ;" and Tiny observed all the coaches that flew past were of velvet, white, blue, red, and all the most gorgeous colours—and the coachmen wore black velvet caps, and very high pointed feathers in them.

"Oh !" she exclaimed, "how I should like to be always sailing about in the air like this ; I should never grow tired of it, and I would rest on all the loveliest flowers and sing continually, 'I'd be a butterfly.' Do you know that song ?"

"Oh dear, yes," said Tinier, "one of our people

composed it a long time ago. I had also another friend who composed well, but in a melancholy style; he was in low spirits ere going into his winter quarters, and wrote 'The Last Rose of Summer.' "

As they were speaking, a sweet perfume began to pervade the air.



"We get near to Roselands," said Tinier, "but I am so anxious for you to see Dijon Lodge, we must reluctantly pass by a great many other beautiful houses to-day. I hope dear Lady Gloire is at home, every one is so fond of her; she is very high up in the world, but, notwithstanding her exalted position, friendly alike to all, and seems as much at home in a cottage as in a castle; she is truly one of Nature's favourites."

Arrived at the entrance hall, several footmen ushered them in; they looked so funny, Tiny thought, broader than long almost, and like beetles in their green liveries.

Tinier turned aside to his wife and remarked, "Ah! my dear, Tea, of course; don't you perceive it? No matter at what hour you call, she is regaling on it. Pleasant and homely smell it is too; I much prefer it to the Attar of Roses some of our friends so much affect."

They found the hostess seated in a gorgeous room, the floor covered with cloth of gold, the walls fluted in salmon-coloured satin, and on numerous golden seats grouped in the centre of the room sat the guests at afternoon tea. Fairies all of them ; their tiny cups were blue, like a Forget-me-not, and they all looked so quaint and so *distingué*, dressed in cream colour, and with the fashionable "mob" caps Tiny had heard these discussed at home, but they were far prettier than the one her mama wore ; these caps seemed to her to be all formed of white flower blossoms, and had little green bows tied in knots at the top. They also wore mittens of cobweb like lace, and she had noticed their cloaks left in the hall, exquisite they were, and seemed to be made of the breast feathers of humming birds. Lady Gloire wore a long-trained dress of shades of amber satin. She was

most dignified and commanding looking, wearing also a high golden crown, and carrying a wand in her hand.

Her manner was so gracious as she advanced to greet them, and she introduced the assembled guests as "My Friends from Roselands," and Tiny as "The Baroness's youngest daughter, just come out."

All sat down and chatted pleasantly of things in general. Tea and refreshments were offered to Tiny; the latter were dew, honey, and pollen cakes, and she tried all, and voted them the most delicious things she had ever tasted.

House decorations some discussed. Lady Forestier said a friend of hers hung her rooms in white velvet, and her boudoirs in primrose satin, but she thought crimson velvet look richer.

"Ah!" said Lady Gloire, "I think it is too warm a

shade for a summer house, but tastes so differ; what would you say to an eccentric friend of mine, I wonder—has she good taste? She dislikes a number of reception rooms, and so has only one large one, and it is hung in pale blue with scarlet bands.”

“Oh! that is not at all *our* style,” chimed in every one.

“Or mine either,” said Lady Gloire, “but she only opens her house in the very hottest part of summer, and soon leaves it, so doubtless people have not time to tire of her one idea. Personally, I really try to please all my friends and suit every season. I don’t leave until late autumn, as I am of a hardy constitution, and can bear a little frost; I try to stay as long as possible in society, for I miss my friends, and find my winter quarters very dull; every one is so kind and flattering to me, beseeching

me to return as early in the season as I can, and saying how they ceaselessly regret my absence."

Tiny observed all the centre rooms were of a deeper shade than those which overlooked the terraces; these latter were hung in cream colour.

"Oh! I see," she said, "all the fairies wear the colours of the flowers to which they belong. I should like best to be the fairy of a 'pink rose.'"

Tinier now rose, and said they must reluctantly say adieu, as he was anxious for his young friend to visit Lake View, and he knew Lady Lily Water closed her doors to any visitors arriving late in the afternoon.

"Farewell, then," said Lady Gloire, "and remember a welcome always awaits you at Dijon Lodge." She escorted them to the entrance gate, and waved her wand in graceful adieu; and as Tiny looked back, and saw her

standing high, high up, gloriously beautiful in the afternoon sun, she sighed and exclaimed, "Oh! that I could have her always near me, I do so love her."

"Now, Tiny," said Tinier, "I am taking you to see a very curious place; the owner is termed 'The Lady of the Lake.' All her property is in islands; she plants them without any variation in meadow lands, only aiming at a green and smooth appearance. We must alight at the edge of the lake and call a boat; she has always one moored in the bay ready for friends."

Tinier gave a whistle, and in an instant appeared a little boat of brilliant glittering blue, like sapphire, in the sun, and its wing-like sails seemed of lace work. "Dragon" was on a little flag that hung over the stern. It was long and narrow, and shot through the water so swiftly. Many were the islands they



had to pass ere the house—palace, it looked truly—was reached.

Tiny at once began to think of having read about Venice, and how the marble palaces there were built on the water's edge. This must be just the same, she thought ; all white marble it was, and the wall of the outer courts were of green malachite. The reception hall they were ushered into was the largest and most gorgeous Tiny had ever seen ; it was all splendidly carved in gold, and there, cold, alone, but beautiful in the extreme, sat the Lady Lily Water.

As she rose to greet them, Tiny saw that her dress was of silver gauze, with fringes of diamonds ; and as she glided up to meet them in her graceful, undulating way, she resembled rippling water in the moonlight.

"I am happy to see you," she said, and then came a silence.

All sat down on the richly carved golden seats the hall was full of, and every one seemed chilled in manner, and to find conversation difficult to carry on.

Tiny listened to the lapping of the water on the marble steps, and shuddered as the cool breeze swept in.

"Oh! do you not find this palace very cold and lonely?" she asked.

"Oh no," replied Lady Lily, "cold water agrees best with my constitution. I am able to remain but a short time here during the summer, and I always pine to return to my home on the lake."

Tiny soon felt uncomfortable and anxious to be gone, so she looked pleadingly at Tinier, who made an excuse that the sun was going down, and he feared the cold air of

the lake for Tiny, who was delicate, and said they must bid a hasty adieu. Formal bows were exchanged, and they departed, nothing loath to leave the glittering lady in her marble halls.

Tiny was greatly frightened on seeing monster fish in the lake, huge creatures that stared at her without winking their round glassy eyes, and opened their great gaping mouths as she passed by them. She felt sure they wanted to swallow them all up, boat included.

"Don't be alarmed," said Tiniest, "we shall soon reach land again," and she drew her to her side, and threw one end of her mantle around her: it was green velvet, and lined with swan's down, and Tiny nestled into it, and grew more confident as warmth was restored to her little shivering frame. She was delighted when at last Lily Land was reached, and they wandered about on the



sloping terraces, talking of the experiences of the afternoon, until the western sky began to glow with red.

"Ah!" exclaimed Tinier, "our time together will soon be up, Tiny; is there anything else I can do for you, or tell you about?"

"Oh! yes, dear, dear Mr. Tinier," she said; "let us rest on this square stone seat under the old tree. There are some things I've longed all my life to know. Do tell me, What do you fairies play at? what amusements have you?"

"Oh!" he replied, "we dance a great deal, but we

like the moonlight best for that, and we go into the smooth lawns and hang up dewdrops for lamps."

"Oh!" said Tiny, "I have seen fairy lamps, then, for sometimes, just before I get into my bed, I look out at the moon, and I have seen the lawn all glistening like."

"Then," continued Tinier, "after showers we sometimes have a splendid game of chase up and down the coloured paths of the rainbow; I always choose the rose-coloured one, for it is marvellous how charming everything on earth looks when seen through it!"

"I have always had a great wish to fly with a bird," said Tiny; "were you ever able to do that?"

"Oh! yes, often," replied Tinier, "it is a favourite pastime with me. The lark is my favourite, she mounts up so high, so high."

"Where does the 'blue' I see end?" said Tiny; "that puzzles me."

"It goes on for ever, I've been told—never comes to an end," Tinier replied.

"Never!" said Tiny; "what does 'never' mean?"

"That is one of the things I cannot tell," Tinier answered, "and I never knew anyone that could."

"When you are up with the lark, does the earth look small, so small? and do you ever come near the moon? Do tell me about that," Tiny said, "for I often so want to see up into it, and know all about what it is like up there."

"No, no," Tinier replied; "don't you ever want to go up there; a very cross old man, I am told, lives up there. I've known naughty children often cry for the moon, and he looks down and does so laugh at them!"

He lives up there all alone, I think, and wanders over bare high mountains; and when anyone is too curious about him and his country, and try to peer into it, he throws stones at them."

"Do not let us talk of him any more," Tiny said, "and I will try and never think about him again. Tell me where you fairies go in winter?"

"We go underground, some of us," Tinier answered, "but come up to dance at night when the ground is paved with diamonds."

"Frost, do you mean?" said Tiny.

"Oh! I don't know what you monsters of earth call it," said Tinier, "but I have always heard you were blind to so many beauties of nature, and had no imagination, we fairy folk often so pity you. In winter, some of us camp out in little bright red huts—you may see them

on all sides" ("Berries," said Tiny, under her breath); "and then we are very fond of cone castles up on the top of the fir trees, they are so firmly built and keep out the cold, and all the compartments are perfumed with the strong pungent odour of the pine, that is considered so good for health, and to help to keep up warmth in winter. We like to go into newly-built houses each season, for oftentimes storms blow down our habitations of the previous year."

"Oh! I have seen them lying on the ground," said Tiny, "and picked them up, too, but I never thought that you fairies had been in them."

"Haste! haste!" Tinier called; "one more wish and I must be gone. See! the sun already sinks down low behind those dark green fir trees."

"Oh! not yet, not yet," cried Tiny, "I have such a

great wish yet to be fulfilled—it is to swing and sway about on the tip-top branch of a high tree, as I have seen the birds do.”

“Then come quickly,” said Tinier, “and doubtless some place near we shall find some of our fairy ladders already laid up a tree.”

“Ladders?” said Tiny.

“Yes, ladders; don’t you see a beauty here up this



old oak? Give me your hand ;” and, so saying, he lifted her up and placed her foot on a stem of ivy that twined round and round the old tree up to the very topmost bough ; she seemed to mount it so easily, and to reach the top without effort.

“Now for a delicious swing high up in the air,” she said ; “oh ! I have so longed for this.”

“Take care, I must be gone, the sun has sunk,” said Tinier.

“Oh ! don’t leave me, Tinier, I am afraid I shall fall ! Oh !”———

* * * * *

“Tiny ! Tiny ! where are you ?” cried a well-known voice. “Come in, my child, the afternoon grows cold.”

Tiny awoke, and Bluffy jumped up and wagged his tail and looked at her. "Oh! Bluffy," she said, "I am so startled; have we been asleep, and was it all only—only a dream? Tiny, Tinier, Tiniest. Is that grammar? It sounds now so very nice to me."

THE END.









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